

Deadly chemicals discovered at Deerfield site

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By The Associated Press
RAVENNA — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says it will take steps to prevent a deadly chemical stored at a Portage County dump from contaminating a nearby reservoir, following the refusal yesterday of Hooker Chemical Co. to clean up part of the site.

The EPA had ordered Hooker, of Niagara Falls, N.Y., to remove the chemical, known as C56, from the site.

The company's attorneys

phoned the EPA yesterday and said Hooker would not remove the chemical unless it is dropped from litigation filed earlier by the state attorney general against it and several other producers of toxic wastes stored at the dump.

The state, however, said it would not drop Hooker from the suit unless the company will pay one-fourth of the cleanup cost at the site — including some costs not related to the chemicals produced by Hooker, according to a Hooker spokesman.

The C56 originated at Hooker's

plant in Montague, Mich., and was shipped to Summit National Liquid Services Co. in Deerfield Township.

The chemical is generated in the production of resins, dyes, pesticides, fungicides and pharmaceutical agents.

The EPA said it will take action under the federal Clean Water Act to prevent contamination of nearby soil and waterways by the end of next week.

"It has been determined by U.S. EPA's on-site coordinator that this

hazardous material poses a threat of pollution to a tributary of the Berlin Reservoir," said John McGuire, EPA chief in Chicago.

The reservoir is the backup water supply for Youngstown, Niles and other communities in the Mahoning Valley.

The EPA said C56 is considered toxic if breathed, swallowed or absorbed through the skin.

The C56 was sent to Summit National in three large tanks, at least one of which leaked, the EPA said. Summit National is now out of business.